

From the Mouths of Babes

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Summary: To save a little girl they care for, two women will become unlikely allies.

1. Chapter 1

Milla Meier was well known in Hammelburg. She was always running various donation drives for the war effort, and she sold lovely, if a bit amateurish decorations. Her family had moved into Hammelburg not long after the war began. She was caring and exuberant and was just the image of a sweet little girl. She'd even come to the camp a few times and made the guards feel a bit more upbeat. She was one of those people who just cares about everyone. She was even nice to the prisoners.

Hilda smiled at the little blonde girl, who cheerily waved in response. She walked over to Milla, smiling when she saw the table of sweets clearly for sale. It was a pretty pitiful bake sale given how hard ingredients were to get with all the rationing, but it was a nice idea anyway.

Hilda decided to take pity and buy something, when all of a sudden a familiar man came up to the table.

"Hello, Fraulein Meier," he spoke. She babbled a response back. Hilda tried to remember how she knew him. "Or should I say, Alice?" Both girls frowned, though only one in genuine confusion.

"I'm sorry Herr Kappel, I don't know what you mean." Milla spoke, blue eyes holding only confusion.

"Are the Allies truly so desperate as to use child spies now?" He spoke, and Hilda gasped. She remembered him now. Milla's eyes widened and she started to shake.

"Please sir, I don't know what you mean!" She pleaded, starting to

cry.

"Is this really necessary?" Hilda interjected, feeling sorry for the girl. The man scowled.

"Do not concern yourself with such matters, Fraulein. This is Gestapo business." She stepped back, unwilling to leave, but frightened at the prospect of interfering with the Gestapo.

The man grabbed Milla by the upper arm and yanked her out of her chair. He started dragging her to his car. She struggled at first, but wasn't strong enough to do anything. He slapped her across the face for it, and she bared her teeth for a second before arranging her face into a look of fear. It wasn't exactly fake.

Hilda watched the scene in horror. She couldn't believe that this was happening. She'd seen arrests before, violent ones even, but to arrest a little girl? How could they even think it?

Her thoughts were running wild. She didn't know what to do. Everyone knew what the Gestapo were like. She just couldn't let them torture a sweet girl like that. Even if she were guilty of something.

The men at the camp! She could go to them. She wasn't stupid. She knew that they could do something. They were good men, even if they were supposed to be enemies. Surely they would want to save an innocent child, especially if she were one of their own!

She had been headed home, but she could tell them tomorrow. Or could it even wait that long? Maybe it would be best if they got the word now. She could always pretend she'd left something at work if anyone asked.

She forced herself to act calm, and continue walking for several paces before casually looking down into her bag. She feigned surprise, turning quickly, ready to head back to camp.

* * *

><p>She was just before the gates when a small hand wrapped about her mouth, stopping her from letting out the scream she wanted to. Without warning, she was yanked down into the brush. She was then grasped by the hand and led further into the tree line, one hand still over her mouth.</p>

When they were free to stand up, she saw that her assailant was a woman, her short blonde hair in a stylish curly look. She had an intense look on her face.

"You are looking to contact the Underground through the camp, yes?" She asked. Hilda shook her head, trying to keep to her story.

"Do not lie. You saw someone get arrested and then you head to an Underground location you have no business being at." Hilda hesitated.

"If you go there you will only put her and everyone else at more risk. If anyone thinks she has a connection to the camp, it will be much worse for her." That made sense. Hilda shook off the hand.

"But someone must do something! She's innocent!" The other woman shook her head.

"She is far from innocent. That is the problem."

"That's not my point!" Hilda hissed.

"We are trying. We do not want her hurt either. But we cannot involve the camp. There is no time anyway for them to make some elaborate plan." She looked pained as she said her next words. "It is a shame. Without them, her chances are not good." Hilda rather felt like stomping her foot like a child as she spoke.

"But we must do something!"

"I am alone on this mission. If you are willing..." The woman trailed off. "Well another pair of hands can't hurt." Hilda hesitated. It was one thing to turn a blind eye to a little spying. It was another to actually help. Still, she could be arrested for either, and she wasn't the type to let a child suffer.

"Alright. For Milla." The women smiled grimly.

"Oui. For Milla."

* * *

><p>They tromped through the woods, heading for the safe house. Hilda looked up at the other woman curiously.</p>

"What can I call you?" She asked, knowing better than to ask for a name. The woman looked at her suspiciously anyway.

"Tiger," She finally said.

"Alright," she said. "I'm Hilda."

"Yes, I know. You are the secretary at the camp."

"Yes, I am," Hilda spoke. She wasn't particularly surprised Tiger knew that. Someone was always keeping tabs on you nowadays. They trudged further through the underbrush, and Hilda heard running water. Looking around, she realized they were nearing a lake on the outskirts of town.

Tiger led Hilda to a rather rundown cottage a ways away from the lake. They entered, and though it was much more habitable inside, it still was clearly not in the best shape. The paint on the walls was faded to the point that no color was recognizable and the furniture looked one wrong move away from falling apart. Hilda wasn't sure if all Underground houses were like this, or if this was one they felt they could abandon if she turned on them. She was leaning toward the latter.

"I need to contact someone. Stay here." Tiger instructed. Hilda nodded, and Tiger headed up the small staircase.

Hilda took the opportunity to examine the room further. It appeared to be a small living room. A gutted radio stood on a table in the middle of the room. A bookcase with a few scattered books stood

against the far wall. A door next to it led into a kitchen, which a quick glance revealed was surprisingly well stocked.

It wasn't long before Tiger came back down the stairs.

"I have radioed for help, but I am not hopeful we can get anything."

"May I ask, what was Milla arrested for?" Hilda spoke. She still couldn't quite believe that girl had done anything.

"She is a spy. We did not want to involve her initially, but she was persistent and it's true we are desperate."

"Why would she be so invested?" Hilda wondered aloud.

"Her name is not Milla Meier. Her family is not real. She is an American, visiting a family friend and trapped here when the war broke out."

"Oh my!" Hilda exclaimed.

"The Underground provided them with papers. She and her sister speak German fluently, so we kept them here. There were too many refugees to get them all out."

"So she wants to help her country," Hilda surmised.

"Yes. Apparently, her father serves, and she worries about him." That was understandable. Hilda knew many people who had gone to serve and she was always worrying for their sakes, and she wasn't a little girl. Milla must have felt helpless being so young.

"So her real name is Alice?" Hilda questioned, remembering Kappel's words.

"No," Tiger shook her head. "That is her code name. From the story "Alice in Wonderland." We do not know her real name. It would be too easy to put each other in danger if we did."

Hilda nodded. Hadn't she thought Tiger would use a fake name when they were introducing themselves?

Just then a bang came from the kitchen. Tiger shot Hilda an angry look, and Hilda shook her head at her. She hadn't alerted anyone! How could she in such short time. The only way was if someone else had been following her.

"Well, well, what do we have here?" A voice rang out.

2. Chapter 2

Hilda turned to Tiger in confusion. That was a woman's voice. She saw that Tiger had relaxed at the words. She turned to greet the matronly woman who entered the room.

"Hilda, this is Liesel Schmidt. She runs all the safehouses in this area. Liesel, this is Hilda." Liesel frowned at the girls.

"Yes, I know. You work up at the camp." She turned to Tiger, brandishing a thin folder. "I brought everything we know about their case against Milla."

"How?" Hilda wondered. Liesel frowned again.

"You sure about her, Tiger?" She asked.

"I just want to help Milla," she spoke. Tiger looked at her curiously.

"She already keeps quiet about the boys in the camp. And I don't believe she wants a child to be hurt."

"No. I won't tell anyone." Hilda assured her.

"Speaking of the boys at camp, what about your boy? You gettin' him involved in this?" Liesel asked. Hilda raised her eyebrows. So Tiger had been to the camp. Which boy did Liesel mean? There were a number of possibilities. But the way she was talking Hilda could make a guess.

"No. Their plans take too long and we need to get her out now." Tiger said.

"Alright. But personally, I don't think you're getting her out at all without them. Not from the Gestapo."

"We don't need to bust her out. We need to prove her innocence."

At the new voice, all three women turned to the door. There stood Col. Hogan, his typical grin on his face.

"I'm hurt. Come on Tiger. You think we're not going to notice you when you're right outside the gates? The guards maybe, but not my guys." And his typical arrogance.

"So what's going on?" He started walking toward Tiger when he suddenly caught sight of Hilda.

"Hey, Hilda," he spoke, an odd undertone in his voice. Tiger and Hilda exchanged a look. Both of them could guess what the situation was here. Despite their continued flirtation with the man, they both knew how he was. Both would admit to a little jealousy, but knowing that and knowing the girl was more important, they put it aside for the moment.

"Hello, Col. Hogan. You should not be here," Hilda teased. "Though I always expected something like this." He chuckled, and Hilda went on.

"I want to help the little girl.."

"Little girl?" he questioned, a note of concern in his voice.

"She saw Milla Meier arrested this morning." Tiger said. A strange look passed over his face. He was clearly worried for Milla. He wasn't the type to let an innocent kid suffer but this seemed odd somehow. Likely he'd met her through the Underground and befriended her.

"Well," he said, shaking off the mood. "That makes it even easier. The higher-ups may be paranoid, but they're not that paranoid."

"No, that won't work." Liesel shook her head. "We have information that they've been onto her for nearly two weeks now. They knew."

"Then we must deflect suspicion." Tiger spoke up. Hilda glanced between the three spies as they discussed possibilities. She didn't know what Tiger had thought she could do. She could barely keep up with this conversation.

"If we can make them suspect someone else!"

"Weeks of data..."

"...can't. That'll just hurt!" The words bounced back and forth, the file strewn on the nearest flat surface and examined.

"Wait a minute," Liesel spoke. "Some of these missions are wrong. She wasn't on these assignments." It wasn't uncommon for this to happen. Explanations given by torture tended to not be the most honest, just streams of information they thought they should say. The Underground usually went with it. It took the pressure off the real perpetrators if the Germans thought they had caught them already. But they could use this to cast suspicion.

"How do you know?" Hilda asked. Liesel glanced at her.

"I've got a good memory for these things. And these happened during school hours. We almost never used her then. Too suspicious."

"We could contact the teacher. Maybe she can prove this?" Tiger suggested.

"Maybe." Hogan mused "It's a long shot that she'll be willing to tell the Gestapo they're wrong, but it's worth a try."

"Well there's no time to waste. Hogan, let's you and I head out," Liesel said. Hogan looked back at the girls briefly before nodding. They were the only two who could do it. Hilda was only technically working with them and Tiger was too high-profile.

Hogan quickly dressed in civilian clothes and the two went out. Tiger turned to Hilda uncertainly.

"I see you are a friend of Hogan as well." Tiger said. Hilda worried her bottom lip. She was a little jealous, definitely. Okay, maybe a lot. It was one thing to guess that Hogan had other relationships; it was another to actually meet her.

"Yes. I must admit if you are an example his other 'friends' are quite lovely." Tiger laughed.

"Yes, he has many such 'friends.'" She said.

"I'm not honestly surprised." Hilda said. She knew she had a possessive streak, and she certainly enjoyed being someone he could see any day, but she had never thought he was anything other than

what he was. Deep down, she knew this was just something he did for information and fun and she was okay with that. It was fun for her too.

"No. Neither am I." But Tiger looked troubled. Hilda imagined she looked the same. She wasn't really sure what to do about it. She felt bad, but would she want comfort from Tiger in this situation? She wasn't sure.

"Would you like to keep going over the files? We will need more than this to get Milla out." Tiger suggested.

"All right." Hilda walked back around to the table, again unsure what she could do. She didn't know anything about this work. But she did know a lot about secretarial work. Perhaps she could find some error there.

They settled into a decently comfortable silence, occasionally suggesting ideas back and forth.

"You know the guard Schultz?" Tiger said suddenly.

"Yes. He guards the boys' barracks. You've met him?" Hilda was surprised. She knew that Schultz had a tendency to claim ignorance of the schemes at camp, but this seemed extreme, even for him.

"I was in the barracks once. He walked right in, saw me, and I swear, he nearly died." She giggled. "He was so alarmed!" Hilda smiled. She could imagine the scene. Every time the men pushed it a little further, he claimed he would have to tell, but he never did.

The conversation moved from there into a discussion of the various men in camp both girls had met. They stayed away from the sticky topic, but there was still much gossiping possible.

With conversation flowing, it wasn't long before Hogan and Liesel got back. The girls looked up expectantly. Hogan shook his head.

"No good. She's scared, refuses to talk. We need to find another way." The three spies went back to discussing the merits of various plans, but Hilda was distracted. There was something bothering her about the file, she just couldn't figure it out.

"We've got all their records," Liesel was saying, when all of sudden, it clicked.

"Records!" Hilda burst out. "The school would have records of her attendance! If she really wasn't on these missions, this will prove it." The other three turned to her.

"Right," Hogan said. "Good job, Hilda. We still need more, but that's good." Hilda beamed. Maybe she could do something here after all.

3. Chapter 3

At the safe house, the girls were talking. They had discussed the plans as best they could already and had moved on to new topics. They carefully skirted one topic, getting a bit closer this time. Hilda

took a sip from her glass, laughing lightly.

"So, you've seen him with his men, of course?"

"Yes?" Tiger said, wondering where this was going.

"Have you notice he'sâ€¢! How can I put this? With them, he acts like the parent of a bunch of wayward boys!" Tiger started laughing as well.

"Oh, all due respect and everything, but still! Once, they were doing something by the gates, playing around. And he kept reprimanding them and everything, but it was always with the fondest look on his face, like an indulgent parent. I had to duck back into the office to keep from laughing right there."

"Oh no," Tiger laughed. "I will never be able to stop imagining this now."

"I know," Hilda gestured with her glass. "I can't either. It's honestly distressing."

"Speaking of Hogan," Tiger began. Hilda leaned in expectantly. And well, they spent a good chunk of time demonstrating why you don't want two people you've been involved with to meet.

Meanwhile, Milla was curled up in a corner of her cell. One of the guards had taken pity and given her his jacket to use as a blanket. They weren't fans of guarding a little girl, especially when she was scared and crying- which wasn't exactly fake.

She'd been asked a few questions, which she knew better than to answer. No one was really eager to interrogate her.

"I've told you, I'm in charge of investigating this ring of children!" A familiar voice rang out. Milla poked her head up.

"I understand that sir, but I can't just allow you to talk to the girl unsupervised!" Another man, the one who'd interrogated her earlier, replied.

"Uh, sir, sir." A young man, she couldn't see his rank, ran up. "A general is calling for you, colonel." The first man sighed as though put upon. The colonel (thought really both men held that rank) looked uncertain before sighing as well.

"All right, go ahead. But only until I get back!" He warned, turning away. Colonel Hogan promptly hurried to the cell, catching sight of Milla right away. He sighed again, more genuine this time.

"Damn it. This is exactly why I said they shouldn't involve you. I knew they couldn't keep a kid safe!" Milla gave him a defiant look, before turning more apologetic.

"Look kid, we're getting you out of here. We've got a plan in the works, and someone'll ship you to England for the rest of the war."

"I don't want to!" Milla shouted, careful of what she said.

"Well you can't stay here. Frankly, I don't care what you want. Kids like you need to stay out of this war." Milla was petulant.

"They hurt you?" Hogan looked concerned. Milla shrugged.

"Kappel and that man with you slapped me a bit, but nothing bad." Hogan looked down, anger in his eyes.

"Can't believe they stooped this low. People don't hurt kids."

It was at that moment the colonel came back towards the cells.

"And when we get the paperwork in, you and all your co-conspirators are coming with me, where we know how to deal with you." Hogan said loudly.

"As I said sir, we are trying to get this worked out." The other said, sighing heavily. "One of my men just gave me a report. We have school records that interfere with her supposed missions."

"Oh?" Hogan asked.

"Ah, it's no matter. We still have enough on her to prove she's Underground."

"Good," Hogan said, looking like he meant the opposite.

"We can't do it! We can't prove her innocent and there's no way to deflect suspicion without others of our people getting arrested." Liesel said. Tiger nodded in agreement.

"We need a new plan. We tried, but they have too much information on her."

"Then we need to implicate someone _not_ in the Underground." Hogan grinned.

"We can't subject an innocent person to the Gestapo!"

"Not unless they are Gestapo," Hogan said.

"How?" Hilda asked. Hogan grinned.

"I think it's time Stalag 13 held its next party."

Colonel Klink sighed heavily. This recent business in town was a mess. Since the girl was arrested, the Gestapo had been cracking down on rebellion. Everyone was panicking over their associations and any doubt. Why even he had just received a phone call from some Gestapo major about his association with the girl. It was at that moment Colonel Hogan came through the door.

"Why the long face?" He wondered as he entered.

"Colonel Hogan, I do not have time to deal with you today. The Gestapo are investigating everyone in town."

"Since the little girl? Whoo, that's a surprise. She never seemed the type."

"You knew her?" Klink caught onto his words. He had him! Hogan cringed overdramatically.

"Oh, you got me sir. Yeah, I met her a few times."

"Ah-ha! Getting messages from her?"

"Oh, alright. A few of the men did. But they weren't to help escape, honest! We know better than that, sir."

"Mhmm. You know, just today, she confessed to passing messages in this very camp. Believe me, there will be severe punishment for anyone who accepted them."

"Oh, understandable, sir. But what about you?"

"Me?" Colonel Klink looked alarmed.

"Well yeah, she snuck those notes past you. All of us wouldn't want anything to happen because of us."

"You think something might happen?" Klink asked.

"Oh, I wouldn't know sir."

"Oh, that's exactly what I was afraid of."

"If only there was some way to show them you're on their side, cheer them up. You know those guys always seem like they could do to unwind a bit."

"That's it! I will host a party for them! Remind them I'm with them and show them how well we run this camp. Then they'll know I'm on their side!"

"Oh, very clever sir. I don't know how you do it!"

"Oh, _Hauptmann _Kappel! It's so good to see you again!" Hilda hurried over to the man in question.

"Ah, yes. _Fraulein_â€|" He trailed off.

"Call me Hilda," she said. "I must apologize for my behavior the other day. I'll admit I was alarmed when I saw the spy was a child. It caused me to overreact. I understand now that people like her must be arrested for the good of Germany!"

"Yes, it is a disturbing case. Rest assured, we won't hold it against you."

"Oh, thank you, _Hauptmann._" She looked down, fluttering her lashes. "Now that's cleared up, I would love to get to know you betterâ€|"

While she was distracting Kappel, Newkirk slipped by. He carefully slipped a radio into a precarious position on Kappel. Hilda asked Kappel to dance.

As they moved to the dance floor, Carter pointed towards them while he was talking to Schultz.

"Look!" Schultz followed his finger, just in time to see the radio fall to the ground. In her next motion, Hilda stumbled over it.

"Oh my! A radio!" She feigned a look of distress. "One of the prisoners must have dropped it!" Kappel frowned.

"You should turn that in immediately."

"Yes, I will. Colonel Klink is just over there."

Shortly later, Colonel Klink and Major Hochstetter were gathered in the former's office.

"I don't understand! The prisoners are usually so well-behaved," Klink moaned.

"This proves there is something going on in this camp!" Hochstetter shouted. "I will find out what is going on here, Klink."

Just then, the radio began making noise. Both men leaned toward it instinctively, and Hochstetter grabbed a paper from Klink's desk. He copied down the message, and Klink leaned over to see it.

"What does it say?"

"It's in code, you idiot. I will transcribe it at my office. It looks to be about a meeting. We have them now!"

End
file.